The Printer to the Reader.

Hearing that many are desirous to see the London ministers petition, and seeing least some corruptions might be spread, in sundry written copies: I thought it meete to prevent the one, and to remoue the other, by giuinge them a true and faithfull copie therof in print, hoping that none wilbe offended by publishing it, seeing that nothing was meant by the first penning of it, neither is, by the present publishinge of the same, but that which is good and ductifull.

TO THE KINGES MOST EXCELLENT MAIESTIE.

The humble Petition of two and Twentie Preachers, in London and the subscribers of.

VVouchsafe (most gracious Soueraigne) a fauourable and pitifull eare, vnto the humble petition, of many your distressed subiects. Preachers of the gospell, now called vpon in your Maiesties name, to approue by subscription and practise, fiue seuerall bookes, with certayne Ceremonies therein prescribed. If any thinge were commaunded vs by your Maiestie, which we might doe, without offence to the highest Maiesthe, there is not a man amonge vs, that would not willingly obey the same, though it were to the losse of all he hath, yea, of his very life. But being perswaded, that the saide ceremonies, and many thinges else in those bookes, are repugnant to the word of God, we most humbly beseech your Highnes: to spare our consciences in the same, especially seeing hetherto, neither our exceptions (a view wherof we haue to shew) haue bin answered, nor any one sufficient reason giuen, according to your Maiesties proclamation, to proue the lawfulnes of the thinges inposed, we haue heard and doe beleeue, that your Maiestie hath often saide, that if any can shew the things required to be vnlawfull, your Highnes will not haue them vrged. And except we be able, by the evidence of holy scripture, to proue the same, we will presently yeld to conformitie requyred. In the meane tyme, it might please your Maiestie in your princly wisdome to consider, that how soeuer these thinges haue not heeretofore bin by authoritye remooued, yet haue they neuer had quyet possession in this Church vnder the gospell, since the first abolishyng of popery, that our late gracious Queene of famous memory, at the humble suite of the Commõs in Parliament, signified her expresse will and pleasure, yet vpon record. *That no preacher or Minister should be impeached, or otherwise molested or troubled, for the rites and Ceremonies in question*, that the common Iudgment, of almost all the painfull & resiant ministers of the land, is against them: that they haue bin long disused in many places, & generally distasted, with the people of better neate, as hath appeared in many parliaments of former tymes. and also in this last. In regard whereof, we humbly beseech your Highnes, to take this burthen from our consciences, and to vouchsaue the continuance of our ministry, at the least, vntill the ignorent and scandolous Ministers be remoued, non-residentes reformed, and all the Churches of this kingdome, be prouided of able, godly, and resident preachers, that popery and Atheisme gett not the head amonge vs, to the ruyne of this famous Church and common wealth. And this we verily hope, your Maiestie will not deny vs, the rather for that we are the seruantes of your God, Preachers of that faith, whereof your Highnes is both professor, and defendor: we haue alwayes syncerely, fauoured and to our power furthered, your iust and lawfull clayme vnto this kingdome: we are aduersaryes to them, that are aduersaryes to your soule and body, supremacie, Crowne, and Kingdomes. We haue bin brought vp, and taken degrees in the vniuersities: we are many of vs become greayheaded in the seruice of God, and of his Church, hauyng preached the gospell, some of vs ten yeares, some twenty, some thyrty, and some more, and diuers of vs in this Cittye adventured our liues by preachinge, in the tyme of the late infection: neither are we so fewe, as is pretended: to say nothing of our brethren, which yeeld with much greife and sorrow of harte: we haue wyues and children, kinsfolkes & frend depending on vs, who are all vndone, if we be displaced. God forbid, that euer it should be sayd or written, in succeeding ages, that in the dayes of so religyous, and learned a Kinge, so many learned and paynfull pastors and preachers, were cast out, as vnsauery salt: and that for refusynge such a subscription, as in no age of the Church, was euer vrged, and is more then the law of the land requireth, and for not vsinge such ceremonies, as are profetable to none, Prince or subiect, and (to speake the least) haue bin and continue, to be polluted with Idolatry: and in the meane tyme, so many dumbe Ministers, so many scandolous Ministers and non-resydents (the shame and bane of the Church of God) keept in, and that so many learned, godly, and (many of them) aged men, were expoted to such reproach and misery, as nether the dumbe and scandolous ministers with theirs of late, nor Monkes, Fryers and Nunnes, in former tymes haue bine. Oh that your *Maiestie* did know, the reproach that is already fallen vppon vs, yea vpon the gospell which we haue preached, the insulting of Papistes and prophane persons, the discouraging of younge students, the pitifull cryes of many thowsandes most faithfull subiects throughout the land, and cheifely in your Highnes chamber, and famous Citie of London. If your Maiestie did but heare and see, these wofull effecties, your royall and compassionate harte (we are perswaded) would not be able to indure the same. But your Maiestie is, as an Angell of God, to discerne more than is meete for vs to speake. And therfore forbeareyng to proceed further heerein, we humbly cast our selues, at your Maiesties feete, for the continuance of our ministrye, to the glory of God: and saluation of his people, thorough Iesus Christ, whom we dayly beseech to blesse your Maiestie, and posteritie foreuer.